

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 35 are pending in the application. Claims 4, 5, 8 through 11, 14 and 16 through 22 are cancelled. Claims 31 through 35 are newly added.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 28 through 30 are allowed, and that claim 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Rather than rewriting claim 26, Applicants have cancelled claim 26 and incorporated subject matter from claim 26 into independent claim 25. Thus, claim 25 is now an allowable independent claim.

Newly added independent claim 31 recites features similar to those provided in allowable claim 25. Applicants submit that claim 31 is also allowable. Claims 32 through 35 depend from claim 31, and therefore are allowable claims.

Claims 1 through 3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 23 and 24 are amended to depend from claim 31 and thus claims 1 through 3, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 23 and 24 are allowable.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 3 through 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,811,523 to Artwick (hereinafter "Artwick"). Claims 1 and 3 are amended to depend from allowable claim 31, and are thus allowable. Claims 4 and 5 are cancelled. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection is overcome and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 3 through 5.

In the Office Action, claims 1 through 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,195,599 to Salini (hereinafter "Salini"). Claims 1 through 3, 6 and 7 are amended to depend from allowable claim 31, and are thus allowable. Claims 4 and 5 are cancelled. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection is overcome and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 through 7.

In the Office Action, claims 9 through 12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,426,471 to Gubitose (hereinafter "Gubitose"). Claims 9 through 11 are cancelled. Claims 12 and 15 are amended to depend from allowable claim 31, and are thus allowable. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection is overcome and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 through 12 and 15.

In the Office Action, claims 17 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 4,366,873 to Levy (hereinafter "Levy"), claims 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No.: 6,038,465 to Melton, Jr. (hereinafter "Melton"), and claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,722,611 to Tirkkonen. Claims 17 through 19, 21 and 22 are cancelled. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections are moot.

In the Office Action, claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,232,064 to Kroll et al. (hereinafter "Kroll"). As discussed above, claim 25 has been amended and is an allowable claim. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

In the Action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Artwick, and was also rejected as being obvious over Salini. Claim 8 is cancelled, therefore the rejections are moot.

In the Action, claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Gubitose in view of United States Patent No. 614261471 to Miyahara. Claim 13 is amended to depend from allowable claim 31, and is thus allowable. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection is overcome and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 13.

In the Action, claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Gubitose in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,677,156 to Nakano, et al., and claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Gubitose or in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,876,805 to Peoples or in view of United States Patent No. 4,876,805 to Weber, et al., (hereinafter "Weber"). Claims 14 and 16 are cancelled, therefore the rejections are moot.

In the Action, claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Levy in view of Artwick, and was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Melton in view of Artwick. Claim 20 is cancelled, therefore, the rejection is moot.

In the Action, claims 21 through 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over United States Patent No. 6,407,351 to Meyer, et al. in view of Salini. Claims 21 and 22 are cancelled. Claim 23 is amended to depend from allowable claim 31, and is thus allowable. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection is overcome and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 21 through 23.

In the Action, claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Kroll in view of United States Patent No. 4,082,153 to Provi. Claim 27 depends from allowable claim 31, and is thus allowable. Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection is overcome and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 27.

An indication of the allowability of all pending claims by issuance of a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 8/26/05



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